Boeing ScanEagle UAV Surpasses 10,000 Combat Flight Hours

ScanEagle, a long-endurance fully autonomous unmanned aerial vehicle developed by Boeing [NYSE:BA] and The Insitu Group, has surpassed 10,000 combat flight hours in less than two years supporting U.S. Marine Corps and U.S. Navy operations.

Since being deployed with the First Marine Expeditionary Force in August 2004, ScanEagle has completed 8,900 combat flight hours in Iraq, providing real-time imagery to tactical commanders. Deployed with the U.S Navy since July 2005, ScanEagle has amassed 1,600 hours supporting Expeditionary Strike Group (ESG) missions and conducting oil platform security in the Persian Gulf.

"Both the Marines and Navy rely heavily on ScanEagle due to its long-endurance capability and ability to provide critical intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR)," said Peggy Holly, Boeing ScanEagle program manager. "Over the past 18 months flying demanding land- and ship-based missions, ScanEagle has proven that an affordable ISR system can acquire high-value targets and provide critical situational awareness to those who need it."

In Iraq, the four-foot-long UAV is being used as a forward observer to monitor enemy concentrations, vehicle and personnel movement, buildings and terrain. Boeing and Insitu have worked with the Marines on new operational concepts that have tripled ScanEagle's operating range.

On board the USS Cleveland, ScanEagle supported ESG activities in the Persian Gulf, and now will be deployed on a number of other Navy ships as well.

"The Navy has had great success using ScanEagle to identify and target suspicious ships," Holly said. "ScanEagle also has played a key role in protecting Iraq's oil platforms by sending real-time images of enemy combatants to coalition force ships."

For a vehicle of its size, ScanEagle's endurance and payload combination is unmatched. The ScanEagle system can provide more than 15 consecutive hours of "on-station" coverage. It also has demonstrated the ability to operate in harsh weather environments, including high winds and heavy rains -- conditions that can keep other UAVs on the ground.

ScanEagle carries either an electro-optical or an infrared camera. Both are inertially stabilized. The gimbaled camera allows the operator to easily track both stationary and moving targets. Capable of flying above 16,000 feet, the UAV normally provides persistent low-altitude reconnaissance.

Due to its unique launch and recovery systems, ScanEagle takeoffs and landings are unaffected by terrain and other conditions such as crosswinds. It is launched autonomously via a pneumatic wedge catapult launcher and flies pre-programmed or operator-initiated missions. A "Skyhook" system is used for retrieval, with the UAV catching a rope hanging from a 50-foot high pole. The patented system makes ScanEagle runway-independent with a small footprint for launch and recovery operations.

The Boeing/Insitu team received a contract from the U.S. Marine Corps in July 2004 to provide two ScanEagle "mobile deployment units." That contract was renewed in July 2005. In April 2005, the U.S. Navy signed a $14.5 million contract with Boeing and Insitu to provide ISR coverage during Naval Expeditionary Strike Group missions and security for oil platforms in the Persian Gulf. A $13 million contract modification was awarded in September 2005 to provide ScanEagle system support for Navy high-speed vessels and an afloat forward staging base.

Phantom Works, the advanced research and development unit and a catalyst for innovation for The Boeing Company, is assisting in the development of ScanEagle. It provides advanced solutions and innovative, breakthrough technologies that reduce cycle time and cost while improving the quality and performance of aerospace products and services.
A unit of The Boeing Company, Boeing Integrated Defense Systems is one of the world's largest space and defense businesses. Headquartered in St. Louis, Boeing Integrated Defense Systems is a $30.5 billion business. It provides network-centric system solutions to its global military, government, and commercial customers. It is a leading provider of intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance systems; the world's largest military aircraft manufacturer; the world's largest satellite manufacturer and a leading provider of space-based communications; the primary systems integrator for U.S. missile defense and Department of Homeland Security; NASA's largest contractor; and a global leader in sustainment solutions and launch services.
The Insitu Group, located in Bingen, Wash., develops miniature robotic aircraft for commercial and military applications. Insitu, which introduced the first UAV to cross the Atlantic Ocean, developed its SeaScan UAV to serve the commercial fishing industry for fish spotting, and is developing vehicles for other commercial applications. For more information about the company, see www.insitugroup.com.
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